

I have long said that budgets are moral documents. They reflect our choices, our priorities and they most clearly define our values, as a government and as a nation. On every issue our nation faces, it is our responsibility to ensure that the policies we pursue are consistent with the values we cherish. And this budget is just more of the same misplaced priorities.

Because at its core that is what this budget does, and it is what this budget was intentionally designed to do... cut vital programs and increase the national debt in order to create tax cuts for the rich and the super rich.

We in Western New York know very well the importance of creating and maintaining jobs to keep our economy alive. We understand that creating jobs is vital for expanding and revitalizing our economy.

What is so striking to me is that even in the face of a looming recession, President Bush's budget does nothing to strengthen the economy and fails to respond to the real needs of middle class families in Western New York and across the nation.

However, the President's budget does not make this a priority.

For example, the budget proposes reducing funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), from \$90 million to just \$4 million. This program which has my full support, is the only program that provides resources and services to small and medium U.S. manufacturers to help them create jobs, leverage private-sector investment and compete in the global 21st century economy. The \$4 million allocated by the President's budget is far below the level needed to maintain services. In New York State alone, businesses will lose \$4.571 million in services, resulting in estimated losses of 2,253 jobs and over \$93 million in private investment.

The President also decided to cut the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) by \$731 million. CDBG, which created over 55,000 new jobs in 2006, provides flexible funding to communities and states for economic development and job creation, affordable housing, and help for citizens who need it. This cut will mean \$65 million will be denied from New York State

alone, meaning less ability to create jobs.

As we are famous for our winters in Buffalo, we know the high costs of heating our homes during the winter. The President's budget also cuts Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding, which helps about 5.8 million very low-income households, the majority of which include a child under five or an elderly or disabled person, by \$367 million. This cut will mean nearly \$40 million less will be available for New York State to help our fellow citizens survive our winters. Mind you, home heating costs for the average family have increased by 80 percent since 2001.

Other cuts to our home state include over \$11 million for the Dislocated Worker Program which successfully provides job training, career guidance, placement, and other services for workers who lost their jobs due to trade.

The long list of his failed policies and leadership do not stop at economic development. The President also proposed cuts of \$17 billion over the next five years would shift more of the burden of funding Medicaid services onto the states. These cuts are in addition to a series of regulations in FFY 2008 that reduce Medicaid funding by \$12 billion over five years, compounding the impact on states. Also, with almost 3 million in New York on Medicare, the President has proposed to cut the program by \$178 billion over five years.

America can do better than this. We can do better than turning the American dream into a privilege for the few, instead of a right for all.

This budget is just more of the same from a President who believes that defense spending; the War in Iraq, and tax cuts for the rich should come at the expense of fiscal responsibility, education, healthcare, and a host of other important issues.

Over the coming months, Democrats will fight for a budget that reflects the values of America's working families: national security, prosperity, opportunity, fairness, community, and accountability. A responsible budget is the first step towards building a future worthy of the trust of the American people, the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, and the aspirations of all of America's children.